WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Donate

SCHOOLS

It’s curtains for Winchester High School theater classes – at least for now

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

February 21, 2025 . 6:00 AM — 3 min read

Winchester High School is going to take a break from its theater classes due to low enrollment. But school officials say they are going to re-evaluate the program before taking any further action. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY

The lights have been dimmed at Winchester High School in hon passing of its theater classes.

Subscribe

Principal Dennis Mahoney said when it came time to solidify course selection for the 2025/26 school year, the decision was made to drop theater classes from the roster of offerings.

"We're going to take the theater classes out due to low enrollment," Mahoney told the School Committee during a recent meeting.

But he quickly added it will likely only be for a year or two while the program is re-evaluated.

Mahoney said when he was first interviewing for the job as principal, he looked over the school's course selection and was shocked to find there were no theater courses being offered.

"Particularly knowing that the performing arts is highly respected and we do a great job in terms of our spring musical, our fall play and the middle school program's legendary," he said.

Over the last few years, Mahoney had remedied the situation by putting together theater courses, but, he said, they haven't seen the enrollment they expected. With a need to better use limited resources, Mahoney said it was time to make the hard decision and end the program, for now.

"I think you all know I'm not afraid of tinkering and trying to find ways to make changes and updates so it's not gone forever," he said. "It's just on the shelf for right now."

Donate today!

School Committee member Chris Nixon said he had some anxiety around cutting the program, given capital improvements made to the th some past lengthy discussion over whether or not to add a Mandarin class.

Subscribe

Mahoney assured Nixon the auditorium with a new curtain and new lighting has never looked better and the updates would not go to waste. The theater program has never been stronger, it is the theater classes that are struggling, he said.

School Committee member Michelle Bergstrom said what they really needed to do in order to boost interest in the classes is to support a theater arts program.

"I think having Theater Arts I and Theater Arts II is not a theater program," she said. "And it is not a theater program when we have to classify it under the English Department."

She also said there was a bit of a difference between adding one language class to the schedule and building out an entire theater arts program.

"What I hear Mr. Mahoney saying is that it's not necessarily a lack of interest in the theater program, but it's a lack of enrollment, which, to me, are two different things," Bergstrom said.

She also suggested they go to the students to see if a theater program is something they want and if so, how would they envision it working with their schedules.

Superintendent Dr. Frank Hackett said he'd go one bigger. He believes the district needs to commit to a theater department, not simply a program.

He said when you only offer a one-off class, there might be students who want to take it but can't fit it in their schedules. He said a theater department is also part of the district's 2030 plan, but if they were going to build one, they had to do it right.

Subscribe

"You need a champion," he said. "They take work. They take someone who is full time trying to build a feeder system, who is recruiting kids and we have to have the ability to have options ... for students to be able to access it."

School Committee member Tom Hopcroft said Hackett's plan should go on the wish list while they figure out what's needed and how they might handle it down the road.

Winchester News is a non-profit organization supported by our community. If you appreciate having local Winchester news, please donate to support our work, and subscribe to our free weekly newsletter.

Related

SCHOOLS

Winchester High School club hopes art contest will foster interest in Black history, culture

When then-freshman Christie Clark approached Carson Sarpong about becoming a co-founder for her club, Black Student Union, he was hesitant. Three years later, Sarpong is the president, and the club has

SCHOOLS

Winchester High School's speech and debate team sees a meteoric rise

Winchester's speech and debate team, like most things, began with only [illegible] students competing in its i[illegible] receiving little attention fro[illegible] Yet now, what began as a modest club for fun,

Subscribe

organized the Black History Project, a contest that invites students to create art about Black history and culture. The

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT

February 5, 2026

has grown into something significant and respected by the entire Massachusetts debate

XIYUE ERIC HAN | CORRESPONDENT

January 30, 2026

SCHOOLS

Winchester High School Athletic Department reschedules open house for 8th graders

The following was submitted by the Winchester High School Athletics Department: On Monday, Feb. 2, the Winchester High School Athletics Department will be hosting its rescheduled open house night for 8th graders from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the auditorium. Come to an informational meeting, meet the coaches, learn

January 27, 2026

EVENTS

Winchester High School Black Student Union launches 'Black History Project' contest, community showcase

The following was submitted by the Black Student Union at Winchester High School: The Black Student Union (BSU) at Winchester High School (WHS) is proud to announce the launch of the Black History Project, a contest designed to foster education, research, and creative expression surrounding Black history and culture. The

January 14, 2026

Latest

Subscribe

PROMOTING HEALTH & EMPOWERMENT
HEAR FROM HIGH SCHOOL LEADERS
LEARN THROUGH INTERACTIVE GAMES
MEET NEW PEOPLE
FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY
Middle school & high school students, teachers, parents, friends, community members - come and bring a friend!
FOR MORE INFORMATION:
EMAIL OFFICE@NFSJ.ORG
CALL 781-729-7100
NETWORK for SOCIAL JUSTICE
FROM WINCHESTER AND CHELSEA
GIRL UP
WOMEN IN STEM
GIRLS GOTTA RUN
MIND & MATTER

EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

Subscribe

High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

WINCHESTER NEWS
A TRUSTED AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Subscribe to Winchester News

© 2026 Winchester News Group, Inc. Copying and sharing with permission for non-commercial use only.

Subscribe